

Asparagus Casserole

- 1 Tablespoon oil
- 2 Tablespoons regular flour
- 3/4 teaspoon herbal blend (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1 cup low fat (skim) milk
- 1/2 cup low-fat shredded Swiss or cheddar cheese
- 1/2 pound sliced, sautéed mushrooms (makes 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup very finely cut celery
- 1 pound cooked tender-crisp asparagus (2 1/2-3 cups)
- 1 cup crushed crackers (saltines are fine)

Heat oil in a saucepan. Stir in flour and seasonings; cook until mixture bubbles. Add milk gradually, stirring until blended. Bring rapidly to boiling; cook and stir 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from heat; add cheese and stir until cheese is melted. Mix in mushrooms and celery. Line the bottom of a lightly oiled shallow 1-1/2-quart casserole with the asparagus. Pour cheese mixture over asparagus. Sprinkle with cracker crumbs. Bake at 350°F for 25 minutes or until thoroughly heated. If desired, place under broiler until crumbs are browned.

Yield: 6 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (140 calories, 4.5 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 2 gram fiber, 230 mg sodium)



Asparagus Frittata

- 2 large eggs
- 4 egg whites (6 Tablespoons)
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 bunch asparagus (about 1 pound), cut into 1-inch pieces (3 cups)

In a bowl, beat eggs & tarragon lightly, seasoning as desired. In a non-stick skillet, heat oil over medium high heat. Stir-fry asparagus until tender (about 3 minutes). Pour egg mixture into pan over asparagus.

When the eggs are almost cooked, flip frittata over. Cover and lower heat. Cook an additional minute or until eggs are completely set.

Yield: 8 servings; serving size 1/2 cup (50 calories, 3 grams fat, 0 grams trans fat, 1 gram fiber, 40 mg sodium)

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Herkimer County Farmers' Markets

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceherkimer/programs/local-foods/local-farmers-markets/>



Cornell Cooperative Extension Herkimer County

www.cce.cornell.edu/herkimer



Creating Healthy Places

Asparagus



Herkimer County Produce Cycle



PLANT * GROW

- * Asparagus is a hardy, long-lived perennial; plants can survive for decades so be sure to carefully consider your planting site.
- * Propagate by seed, division or separation.
- * Divide plants in early spring if desired.
- * Asparagus plants prefer loose, deep soil high in organic matter.
- * Purchase disease-free one year old crowns for planting.
- * If grown from seed, asparagus requires one extra year to establish edible spears.
- * Plant crowns 4-6 weeks before last frost, 18-24" apart in trenches 8" deep.
- * Mulch around plants to prevent weeds.
- * A moderate 2-3 week harvest can be expected from crowns 2-3 years after planting. With each successive year, your harvest window will lengthen to a maximum of 6-8 weeks.
- * Harvest spears when 6-10" long breaking or cutting them off at ground level.
- * Stop harvesting when spears reduce in size to the diameter of a pencil. Let the smaller, remaining spears grow into ferns.
- * If unpicked, spears grow to ferns reaching 5-9 feet tall. Cut off fern growth to the ground after they turn yellow and die.

Cornell University Home Garden Websites:

General gardening:

<http://gardening.cals.cornell.edu/>

Asparagus specific:

<http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scenee3ed.html>

ENJOY YOUR ASPARAGUS

- * 5 spears of cooked asparagus have only 20 calories, no fat, and 2 grams of fiber.
- * Asparagus is a low-calorie, low-sodium source of vitamins A, C, and B6, folate, potassium, and phytochemicals.
- * Asparagus plants are dioecious, meaning that male and female flowers are produced on separate plants.
- * White asparagus is grown underground, which keeps it from turning green. Peel before cooking and use like green asparagus.
- * Try fresh asparagus with lemon juice.
- * For easy grilling, skewer several spears with bamboo skewers to make a raft. Spray with oil; season as desired; grill until tender.
- * Asparagus is great stir fried, steamed, microwaved, grilled or roasted.
- * Cook until crisp-tender or roast with olive oil and parmesan cheese.
- * Microwave 4-7 minutes until crisp-tender.

Websites For Healthy Eating:

USDA: www.myplate.gov

Cornell University Food & Nutrition Education in Communities (FNEC): <https://fnec.cornell.edu/>

PURCHASE

- * Asparagus is one of the first vegetables harvested in the early spring; and is available May and June in New York Farmers' Markets.
- * When you buy asparagus, look for firm stems and tightly closed flower heads that are deep green or purplish in color.

PRESERVE

- * Refrigerate fresh asparagus for up to four days in a plastic bag or standing upright in water (like flowers in a vase). You can also wrap a damp paper towel around cut ends of asparagus to keep them moist in the refrigerator.
- * To freeze, blanch small spears 2 minutes; medium 3 minutes; and large 4 minutes in boiling water. Cool in ice bath; drain; and freeze in freezer-safe bags or containers.

Food Preservation Websites:

National Center for Home Food Preservation:
www.homefoodpreservation.com

CCE Herkimer County Food Preservation Resources: <http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceherkimer/programs/local-foods/food-preservation-resources/>

RECYCLE * COMPOST

- * Disease free asparagus scraps provide a rich nitrogen source, nutrients and moisture to your compost.
- * Vegetable scraps are the "green" additions to your compost.

Composting Resources:

Cornell Waste Management Institute:
<http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/factsheets.htm>

Composting at Home:

<http://cwmi.ccs.cornell.edu/smallscale.htm>

PREPARE

- * Before cooking asparagus, cut or snap stalks off at their natural bend. Peel more mature or larger stalks.
- * Wash well before eating.
- * Tender asparagus spears are tastiest when eaten as soon as possible after harvest.